News Review of Current Events the World Over

Norris Urges Congress to Curb Supreme Court—Oratory on Lincoln Day—Death of Charles Curtis—Long Newspaper Tax Invalid.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD

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SPEAKING in advocacy of the administration's substitute farm bill, Senator Norris, the independent Republican from Nebraska, scathingly attacked the Supreme court's AAA decision and urged congress to use its right to curb the court's power. He argued that the 6 to 3 decision itself was unconstitutional by the court's own reasoning and shouted "It cannot stand."

Senator Norris

"The regulation of agricultural production, they say, is unconstitutional because not mentioned in the Constitution," Norris asserted. "Nowhere in that great document is there a syllable, a word, or a sentence giving to any court the right to declare an act of congress unconstitutional. Hence, when the court indulges in that pastime it is itself violating the Constitution according to its own words."

Norris quoted from the majority opinion of the Supreme court holding that the regulation and control of agricultural production was a federal affair reserved to the states and beyond the power of congress. Under that decision, he declared, not only the pending bill but "a large portion of the laws which congress has passed during the last hundred years are absolutely unconstitutional."

Of the later decision ordering return of processing taxes to the processors, the senator said Secretary Wallace perhaps was too severe in calling it the greatest legalized steal in history, and added: "But it is a gift, the greatest gift since God made salvation free."

Norris urged that congress pass a law requiring unanimous decisions by the Supreme court to overrule the acts of congress. He said he would be content to let the Supreme court's decision in the Child Labor case stand if it were unanimous.

Vice President Garner said: "I was always fond of him. I was associated with him in the house and senate. He was a fine man and a good friend."

Funeral services for Mr. Curtis and the interment were in Topeka, Kan.

ONCE again the Supreme court of the United States comes to the rescue of a free press. Unanimously the nine justices ruled that the Louisiana law imposing a punitive tax on the advertising of the principal newspapers of that state is unconstitutional. The law was passed by a legislature controlled by the late Senator Huey Long. The court said of its:

"It is bad because, in the light of its history and of its present setting, it is seen to be a deliberate and calculated device in the guise of a tax to limit the circulation of information to which the public is entitled in virtue of the constitutional guarantee.

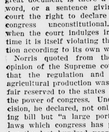
"A free press stands as one of the great interpreters between the government and the people. To allow it to be fettered is to fetter ourselves.

"In view of the persistent search for new subjects of taxation, it is not without significance that, with the exception of the Louisiana statute, so far as we can discover, no state during the 150 years of our nation's existence has undertaken to impose a tax like that now in question.

"The form in which the tax is imposed is in itself suspicious. It is not measured or limited by the volume of advertisement. It is measured alone by the extent of the circulation of the publication in which the advertisements are carried, with the plain purpose of penalizing the publishers and curtailing the circulation of a selected group of newspapers."

LETTERS have been sent by President Roosevelt to the heads of the Latin-American governments inviting them to participate in the Pan-American conference, probably in Washington, that our secretary will be sent to organize the peace machinery of the western hemisphere. Our State department says the meeting will endeavor to provide means for adjusting international disputes by peaceful means. The conference may bring up the Monroe Doctrine for a new definition through multilateral endorsement.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM L. RANSOM of the American Bar association, with headquarters in Chicago, announced that Newton D. Baker, former secretary of war, has accepted the chairmanship of the association's special committee on co-operation between the press, radio and bar against publicity in ferfering with fair trial of judicial and legislative proceedings.



N. D. Baker

The creation of this committee to define standards to be recommended to lawyers, newspapers and broadcasters in the matter of publicity as to court trials, said the announcement, is the outgrowth of incidents arising in the course of the Bruno Hauptmann trial and various proceedings before federal grand juries and bodies, "and it is hoped that such standards can be established through rules of court or through legislation."

ACCORDING to the London Daily Herald, a secret decree providing for expulsion of all Jews from Germany as rapidly as possible has been prepared by Nazi leaders and has therefore Chancellor Hitler for his signature. The paper says the decree provided for the confiscation of all property of expelled Jews.

This story may not be true, but there is no doubt that Hitler and his associates are determined to eliminate all the organizations and groups which they consider in opposition to the Nazi regime, and Hitler himself has declared the Jews are to blame for all the troubles of the Reich in recent years. Scores of Catholic youth leaders have been arrested, charged with co-operation with illegal Communist groups, and it is predicted their organizations will be dissolved. The campaign is carried on with great secrecy. It was announced in Berlin that the district governor henceforth would take orders from the Gestapo, the secret police force of the party, as interpreted as an indication of an immediate carrying out of promises by the Nazi leaders for more ruthless, more determined action against enemies within the reich.

PRESIDENT LAZARO CARDENAS of Mexico went to Monterrey to investigate a stoppage of business and industry in protest against labor troubles attributed to Communists. He issued this ultimatum: "Employers who are fatigued by Mexico's social and economic struggle can turn over their industries to the workers or the government—that would be patriotic. But stoppage of activities cannot be countenanced."

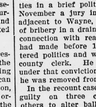
AMERICA'S delegates to the naval conference in London consented to an agreement that would bind this country for five years or more to refrain from building any more cruisers in excess of 8,000 tons in size. When the news reached Washington there was immediate and loud protest in congress against what was termed a "colossal blunder."

High ranking navy officials refused to comment officially upon the London agreement, but said privately that any program which does not include the co-operation of Japan and Germany would be a failure.

Any agreement will not affect the navy's present building program, these officials pointed out, and they refused to be alarmed about the prospect of future limitations.

TRIAL of the assassins of King Alexander of Jugoslavia at Marseilles came to an end at Aix-en-Provence, France, with verdicts of guilty for the six defendants. For three of the band of Croats, members of the secret Ustachi society, who were apprehended, mercy was recommended and they were given sentences of life imprisonment in French Guiana. Two others, who were not present, were sentenced to death. One of the latter is Dr. Ante Pavelich, reputed head of the Ustachi.

ELMER B. O'HARA, Democratic state chairman of Michigan and former clerk of Wayne county, which includes Detroit; State Senator A. J. Wilkowski and 16 others of lesser prominence were convicted in federal court at Detroit of having attempted to steal the 1934 election. Eight defendants in the same count case, which had been on trial for nearly 12 weeks, were acquitted. Two other defendants previously had pleaded guilty, thus bringing to 20 the number facing sentence for their part in the vote recount conspiracy.



Elmer B. O'Hara

For O'Hara, the verdict came as the culmination of a series of calamities in a brief political career. Last November a jury in Macomb county, adjacent to Wayne, found him guilty of bribery in a drainage transaction in connection with real estate deals he had made before 1932 when he entered politics and was elected Wayne county clerk. He awaits sentence under that conviction. After conviction he was removed from office.

In the recount case O'Hara was found guilty on three counts, permitting others to alter ballots, and conspiring to permit others to conduct the recount in an unlawful manner and during the recess of the November, 1934, election by putting Democrats in office instead of the Republicans elected.

LEADERS of congress hope for an early adjournment, by May 1 at the latest, and therefore they pushed the new farm bill forward, trying to get it through both houses without much delay. In their desire to get away from the Capital, they already had decided to let the proposed permanent neutrality legislation go by the board.

The farm bill as rewritten by the senate agriculture committee is based on the soil erosion prevention scheme. Democrats joined with many Republicans in opposing the measure, one of them being Senator Walsh of Massachusetts. In a statement issued to the press he declared it was a "subterfuge" bill conferring "autocratic and blanket authority" on the secretary of agriculture. He said the measure was "neither valid in law nor valid in economics."

Chairman Doughton of the house ways and means committee said he expected definite word from the White House or treasury soon on the amount and kind of taxes that might be imposed to finance the new farm program.

Senator Byrns said he could see no reason why the tax measure should not emerge from the committee by the end of February.

ACTION against John J. Raskob, former chairman of the Democratic national committee when Al Smith was the Presidential nominee, and who is now president of the American Liberty league, has been begun by the Securities and Exchange commission in the form of an alleged deficiency of $1,-020,340 on his 1929 income taxes. The case was forced in to an amendment to the petition recently filed against Pierre S. du Pont two days before Al Smith has bitterly assailed the New Deal. In the petition, which Raskob described as "New Deal persecution," Mr. du Pont was alleged to have undervalued his 1929 holdings of 2,892,917 and an additional tax of $617,316 was asked. In the amended petition accusing Mr. Raskob, it was alleged that he and the industrialist engaged in "fictitious" sales of securities, one to the other, to a total of about $30,000,000 for the purpose of showing losses.

MRS. HUEY P. LONG, widow of the slain senator from Louisiana, took her seat in the senate to complete Huey's unfinished term, becoming the second woman member of the upper house. After eleven months she will be succeeded by Allen Allender, speaker of the Louisiana house of representatives, who was nominated for the regular term.

SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Carter Field

FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

Washington.—Federal taxes are now running at the rate of about $8,000,000,000 a year, with assurance they will be increased, some at this session of congress, more to follow. State and local taxes are running at the rate of about $9,000,000,000 a year. So that the present tax burden of the United States is about $17,000,000,000 a year, with a certainty that it will be larger before it is smaller!

The figures, not the prophecy, have been compiled by experts of the Department of Commerce. They have not been put in the form of a finished report as yet, but the gist of them has been passed along to Treasury department officials and administration leaders on Capitol Hill now working on the present tax problem.

The startling fact is that this makes the average tax for every man, woman and child in the United States $124 a year. But this counts people on relief, dependents whose relatives are too proud to let them go on relief, and a number of other classes which pay far below their average of taxes.

Hence the folks on relief pay some taxes, of course, as for instance the relief client in Detroit who was caught on cigarettes, perhaps a little liquor tax now and then, or even occasionally the tax on cents a pack on playing cards.

But when it is considered that 20,000,000 people, roughly, are on relief, and that most of them contribute very little in the way of taxes, the average of $124 per person should be marked up considerably—far more than the very heavy taxes paid by the rich would pull down the average paid by the middle class folks.

There is no scientific way of computing this, but probably the average paid by each member of of the self-supporting family is not far from $200 a year. Which means that father contributes an average of something like $500 to $1,000 in taxes, whether he knows it or not, of which his income tax is a very small fraction indeed unless father's income goes well up in the surtaxes. In which case, of course, he will be paying a good deal more.

What Smith Hit At

What is the sort of thing Al Smith was hitting at in his Liberty league speech, when he said that it was no use thinking of paying this bill for governmental expenditures by taxing the rich, because the rich simply did not have that much.

The middle class bear the burden. A great many people do not realize—but views are changing rapidly—that the middle class is not as rich as though the administration at Washington, and for that matter the administrations in the 48 state capitols, have thousands of city halls, and the thousands of courthouses throughout the land, were all committed to the Huey Long shire the wealth plan